

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Astra Products Limited

Ohio Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Astra Products Overhauls Infrastructure To Prepare For New Sales Growth

Client Profile:

Astra Products, located in Ravenna, Ohio, manufactures and distributes extruded plastic parts and hardware. The company, founded in 1985, has annual sales of \$30 million. Astra employs 102 people.

Situation:

With a transition to new ownership at Astra Products came a renewed commitment to improving the company's infrastructure. To remain competitive in a growing market, Astra had to significantly reduce scrap and lead times and improve quality by limiting color variations in its processes. To tackle these initiatives, the company selected CAMP, a NIST MEP network affiliate, for its ability to provide a comprehensive business solution.

Solution:

After conducting an analysis of Astra's manufacturing and business processes, the CAMP team concluded that the company needed to address issues in the areas of quality, lean manufacturing, and business systems. CAMP consultants helped to assemble separate teams within Astra to address each initiative.

In the quality area, an ISO team held weekly meetings to flowchart and write standard operating procedures for all areas of the business to meet ISO requirements. CAMP also conducted an overview training session for the team and several supervisors from various departments to promote general awareness of ISO and its requirements.

The IT team addressed the issue of a new business system. By administering an interview process and thorough questionnaires regarding business procedures, a CAMP consultant narrowed down the search to several appropriate software packages. With CAMP's guidance, the IT team selected a new enterprise resource planning (ERP) business system and began training and testing.

A third team, across three shifts, committed themselves to developing more efficient and cost-effective manufacturing processes on one production line by applying lean manufacturing techniques. After experimenting with various methods of extrusion, the team refined the ink processes, added a tool cart to the line, and designed a new fan rack to improve the cooling and shaping process.

Through the implementation of lean manufacturing, assistance on ISO implementation, and ERP business system selection project, Astra Products has reduced its costs and improved product quality, thereby becoming

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well-positioned to enter new markets.

Results:

Reduced total inventory by over 30 percent.

Anticipating sales growth of 50 percent over the next six years.

Positioned company to enter new markets.

Testimonial:

“CAMP helped us improve quality and service to our customers through a comprehensive business solution encompassing quality, shop floor, and eBusiness initiatives. Because of this, we are better positioned for future growth.”

Susie Smith, Customer Service/Logistic Director